

## **MINUTES**

### **MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 57th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION JOINT APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Call to Order:** By **CHAIRMAN STANLEY FISHER**, on January 26, 2001  
at 8:00 A.M., in Room 317-A Capitol.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:**

Rep. Stanley Fisher, Chairman (R)  
Sen. Arnie Mohl, Vice Chairman (R)  
Rep. Tim Callahan (D)  
Sen. Chris Christiaens (D)  
Rep. Jeff Pattison (R)  
Sen. Debbie Shea (D)  
Sen. Tom Zook (R)

**Members Excused:** None.

**Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Present:** Mary Beth Linder, OBPP  
Sandra Whitaker, Committee Secretary  
Todd Younkin, Legislative Branch

**Please Note:** These are summary minutes. Testimony and  
discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

**Committee Business Summary:**

Hearing(s) & Date(s) Posted: Department of Labor & Industry  
Job Service Division and  
Community Services, 1/23/2001  
Executive Action: None

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#### **HEARING ON DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY**

##### **JOB SERVICE DIVISION**

**Ms. Wendy Keating, Administrator, Job Service Division,**  
**Department of Labor & Industry,** gave an overview of the division.

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She stated the Department of Labor & Industry has been one of the most progressive divisions in state government. The department is an award winning agency whose innovative programs and customer focused approaches have resulted in not only national attention but international awards. Many service approaches have become models for sister states. The mission of the Job Service Division is to maintain a high quality work force system for the State of Montana that promotes and enhances the economical health of the business communities. The Division's work is the very core of economic development.

**EXHIBIT (jch21a01)**

**Ms. Keating** distributed information for the committee including a chart of the Job Service Division major programs with the current budget, budget requests for the next biennium, funding source, and required performance. Much funding is through the federal government. The Division operates 23 local Job Service Centers throughout the state. She stated the funding requests are for spending authority for additional federal funds expected for Montana in the future and a request for 2 modified FTE's to become permanent.

The major funding issue for this biennium for Job Service is the Jobs for Montana's Graduates Program (JMG). This program is characterized as the most exciting program in the entire employment and training arena due to the fact that it is designed to help the most at-risk youth in the communities. It is a partnership between state government, local communities, school districts, and the private sector.

**Ms. Keating** went on to say the JMG program began in 1990 in two schools in Montana--Butte and Helena. It has served about 3800 students since its inception, has 829 enrolled this year, 55 programs in 42 schools across the state, 8 on Indian Reservations, 7 Alternative High Schools, Yellowstone Youth Academy, and the Montana National Guard Youth Challenge Program. It is sponsored by the Governor and the Office of Public Instruction and administered through the Job Service Division.

**Ms. Keating** gave an overview of the program including the various funding sources, the typical dropout risk factors that identify students who can benefit from JMG, and other statistics. The funding comes from the general fund, private funds and grants, school district direct support, and substantial fund raising by the students themselves (which does not show up in the budget).

Although there are no statistics to prove the dropout rate is reduced by JMG, there are statistics showing the Montana JMG

serves the most severely at risk students of any of the 1100 affiliated programs in the nation and yet has the highest employment rate with one of the very highest average wages of any other program. This is phenomenal since Montana's average wages are low compared to the national average. They have seen 100% graduation rates at times on the Indian Reservations.

**SEN. CHRISTIAENS** stated the most amazing statistic is the cost--\$731 a year per student.

**Ms. Keating** stated the request for general funds in the Martz budget is \$268,000 per year.

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**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

The following people gave public testimony in support of the JMG program.

**Mr. Bill Kennedy, Yellowstone County Commissioner**, spoke of the program in Billings which started in the 91-92 school year and is now in all three high schools and the career center. A total of 610 students have gone through the program. The Billings school district has become a supporter and contributed major funding. The program has become a great asset to the community.

**Mr. Tom Chesnut, Principal, EAGLE High School (Alternative High School), Columbia Falls School District**. In ten years he has seen the program grow from non-employable EAGLE students to 90% employed at this time. He now receives requests from the community for students to work.

**Mr. Ken Stuker, Principal, Helena High School**, stated JMG changes lives. It keeps them in school to graduate, gives them job skills, self-esteem and confidence. He asked the committee to keep the program and expand it.

**Miss Susie Dickey, student, Helena High School**, told the committee of how her life had changed from a dropout candidate to receiving first place in the national public speaking contest. She stated the components of the class include fund raising for their activities, learning social skills, leadership, civic duties, and career decisions. She went from a barely 2.0 GPA to an honor roll 3.28 GPA.

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**Mrs. Sandy Dickey, Mother, Helena,** stated she had no idea where she would be with Susie at this time without JMG. The program is directly responsible for turning Susie around.

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**Ms. Megan Cleary, student, Helena High School and current officer in JMG class,** testified she has gone from a potential dropout to an involved student in job and community and is on her way to college.

**Mr. Christopher Muitt, student, Butte High School,** stated he was the basic nerd who made friends by doing homework for others. He has always wanted to be a teacher but did not know how to get there until he experienced the JMG program. He will be going to Western Montana College for a secondary education degree.

**Miss Corrine Kueseth, Job Specialist, Billings Senior High School,** reported the program came in to Billings Senior High in August, 1999 with 9 students in her class. This year she has 26. In this program, the students learn to "play the hand they are dealt."

**Mr. Patrick Daniels, Student Civic Coordinator of JMG Class, Billings Senior High School,** stated the JMG program has helped him see a high school diploma is necessary to do what he wants to do. He has gone from failing all classes to enjoying school and being committed to finish high school.

**Miss Alissa Brady, student, Billings West High School,** spoke of her family background of abuse, her own violent behavior, and her struggles with drugs and alcohol. The JMG program has given her pride in herself and direction. Her goal is to go into law enforcement.

**Miss Kim McKittrick, student, Billings Senior High School,** testified when her best friend's mother died she became depressed and turned to drugs, alcohol, and skipping classes. She and her brother both had trouble with the law but she decided to change the path she was on. Her friends told her of the JMG class and she enrolled in it. She has made up credits, improved her grades, found her strengths, and has a goal to become a landscaper. She would like to see more of her friends become involved.

**Ms. Mary Racicot, Job Specialist, Capitol and Helena High School,** feels the students can tell the story. Education can become a

life experience and JMG has done that both for her and her students.

**Ms. Billy Jo Hurt, former JMG student and graduate, Billings West High School,** told her story and the story of how all three children in her family have been affected by the JMG Program. She stated this class makes a difference in your life whether you want it to or not. She was a dropout, liked to fight, and had drug problems. She went back to school and enrolled in the JMG program at the school's strong recommendation. The result was graduation in 1998 with her sister and brother following in her footsteps. She is now going on to college to become a teacher who can make a difference.

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**Mr. Ernie Flynn, Graduate of Helena High School's first JMG class,** testified the JMG program put him on the right track to finish high school, attend college and get his degree. It gave him what he needed then and uses now.

That concluded public testimony.

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**MONTANA COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION**

**EXHIBIT(jch21a02)** and **EXHIBIT(jch21a03)**

**Mr. Brian McGee, Acting Director, Governor's Office on Community Service,** gave an overview of the Montana Community Services Division. Governor Racicot submitted to the Legislature in 1993, and gained approval for, the creation of the Commission on Community Service. The office is administratively attached to the Department of Labor and Industry. In the 8 years since its implementation, the goals have remained simple and straightforward--to renew the ethic of civic duty across the State of Montana. The division has done this in three ways: (1) encourage community service, (2) involve youth in community service, and (3) expand the opportunities for community service. Grants are awarded across the state for projects, training and support. He gave several statistics showing the success of the program including caring for our national parks, putting volunteers on the fire line this summer, and removing graffiti from public areas.

**Mr. McGee** stated the second major aspect of the division is support and partnership development. They provide opportunities

for volunteer service at the local level, host volunteer management institutes across the state, and provide technical assistance for obtaining grants for local projects. They have seen a tremendous rekindling of public service and community service.

**Mr. McGee** stated the division is not asking for additional funds but are asking for spending authority for the new grants expected. Federal funding supplies 99% of the funding for the Community Services Division. They are also asking for one modified FTE to become a permanent FTE which is funded by federal funds.

There was some discussion on the modified FTE versus the permanent FTE and how it would be funded. **Ms. Mary Beth Linder, OBPP**, explained how a modified position occurs during the interim and needs to be made permanent for base consideration when the legislature meets again. This program has 3 FTE's at this time with the additional request bringing it to 4. **REP. PATTISON** asked if federal funds can still be used if it is left as a modified FTE. **Ms. Linder** replied it could.

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**Mr. George Dennison, President of the University of Montana**, who serves as the Chairman of the Montana Commission on Community Service handed out a brochure to explain the Commission.

**EXHIBIT(jch21a04)**

**Mr. Dennison** stated he has seen the importance of this project in the last 8 years as evidenced on the UM campus. It is imperative that young people begin early to learn community service. The Commission was started with a one time only funding of \$500,000 and by continuing to get grants to match, they have made it last for five years. In working with both the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, a youth summit was held in which the agenda was the same as the agenda of the Montana Commission on Community Service. The Commission is not to displace what communities are doing locally but to enhance the community work. **Mr. Dennison** clarified that the Racicot budget requested a general fund increase of \$75,000 each year of the biennium, which would make it a total of \$200,000 for the biennium. In addition, \$200,000 would be raised through private donations. He feels strongly this type of work makes a difference and urged continued support by the committee.

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There was some discussion as to how private funds may be used in matching federal funds. **Mr. McGee** stated there is no specific requirement for state participation for the federal grant. It is required to match the grant from any combination of funds. **Mr. Dennison** stated the match is one to one. The \$137,745 federal funds must be matched by any source of funding. He added that with the small grants issued, he will get a 23 to 1 return on the \$400,000; he gave an example of how it would work.

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**CHAIRMAN FISHER** thanked the people attending and closed the hearing.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 10:32 A.M.

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REP. STANLEY FISHER, Chairman

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SANDRA WHITAKER, Secretary

SF/SW

**EXHIBIT** (jch21aad)